assembly", where the reading of God's law was accompanied by prayer. Hence, in the period of the Second Temple, a Synagogue was to be found in every city and township of Palestine, and the conception became familiar to the non-Jewish world by the erection of similar institutions in all the principal centres of the Diaspora.

Thus, after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, when the Central Sanctuary ceased to exist, no irreparable blow was felt by Judaism as a religious system. Its spiritual potentialities, indeed, were strengthened. The Synagogues continued to function regularly, prayer taking permanently the place of sacrifice:[1] and this, at the time considered the most bitter element in the national disaster, subsequently came to be regarded by the Jew—earlier than any other branch of the human family—the natural mode of worship.

When Christianity began to expand through the world, under the aegis of Paul and his companions, the first centres of missionary activity were the Synagogues, to be found by now in all the most important cities of the Roman Empire. These, rather than the Pagan Temples, formed the model and the ideal of the new sect. First, the Christian missionaries attempted to convert the Jewish congregations to their own way of belief: in case of failure, they set up their own sectarian Synagogues. In either circumstance it was the Jewish, not Pagan, system which was followed. That which to us is so

natural and so obvious must have appeared, to some contemporaries, a remarkable innovation; but, in the long run, it carried the day. And, some six centuries later, when Islam began its triumphant course, the Mosque too, with its

[1] It is not generally realised how long the traces of animal sacrifice, on the pagan model, remained in the Church. Thus, for example, it was customary to slaughter a stag in St. Paul's Cathedral in London each Christmas until long after the ^Reformation—nearly fifteen centuries later than the Jews had abandoned such practices.